



Clement Meadmore (February 9, 1929 - April 19, 2005) was born in Melbourne, Australia. The impulse towards art seems to have come from his mother, Mary Agnes Ludlow Meadmore, a Scotswoman who had lived in Australia from the time she was a small child. As a boy, Meadmore was strongly impressed by his mother's interest in the work of an uncle, Jesse Jewhurst Hilder (1881 - 1916), an Australian watercolorist in the style of Corot. She also instilled an interest in ballet and, first among artists, Edgar Degas. It is tempting to see in this early exposure to Degas the seeds of Meadmore's mature work, which frequently suggest the stress and strains of bodily motion. He originally studied aeronautical engineering at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia. After graduating in 1949, he designed furniture until 1953 when his first sculpture of welded steel was offered for sale. In 1953 he traveled to England, France and Germany, then in 1959 visited Japan.

While a young artist, his work was highly regarded and he was awarded a number of exhibitions, including several one-person shows in Melbourne and Sydney, where he lived since 1960. Meadmore moved to New York in 1963 at the age of 34 and later became a United States citizen. With the exception of a year spent in Australia, as photo editor for Vogue magazine, Meadmore lived and worked in New York.

In his sculpture, Meadmore endowed a single form with clarity and rigor, while at the same time he conveyed the complexity, expressiveness and dynamics of classic modernist sculpture which underlay Meadmore's pursuit of a gestural or "drawn" character for his sculpture. Aside from matters of proportion, his work acquired a monumental scale and a mode of address that engaged in rather than detached from the frankly public, occasionally heroic voice it adopted.

In a typical sculpture by Clement Meadmore, a single, rectangular volume

repeatedly twists and turns upon itself before lunging into space, as if in a mood of aspiration or exhilaration, or simply to release physical forces held in tension. Meadmore's works have always fused elements of Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. Since Meadmore's sculptures are often large, this impression of effortless physical grace is simultaneously underscored and called into question through the fluid signature like immediacy of their physicality.

The combination of Minimalism's ascendancy in the 1960's and its uncompromising reductiveness precipitated a kind of crisis of values for Meadmore, giving him the resolve to move beyond Minimalism by establishing a set of variant aesthetic terms to work with and against. Indeed, despite superficial similarities with minimalism, including, their formal clarity, their basis in geometry, their preference for smooth, uninflected surfaces, and, above all in their penchant for single, unitary forms - Meadmore's sculptures express ideas and feelings beyond their factual presence. Unlike the minimalists, Meadmore never began with an idea developed in advance. His compositions were arrived at intuitively.

Meadmore once said, "I am interested in geometry as a grammar which, if understood, can be used with great flexibility and expressiveness." But Meadmore went farther. His starting point was geometry, a language or "grammar" that is both rigorously structured and conceptual in nature - a construct of the mind - and therefore intangible. He evolved a method that transformed geometry into something pliant and plastic. In his hands geometry acquired an expressive suppleness and materiality more typical of such conventional and palpable media as wood and clay. To borrow his own phrase, Meadmore in his work "transcended geometry," thus placing the stamp of his individual vision on one of the primary modes of twentieth century art.

Meadmore was one of the first sculptors to work with COR-TEN steel, which became his preferred medium. He admired the natural, rusted patina of this steel which, in this case, gives the impression of an industrial beam, no longer of any use and left to rot on a vacant block. In the studio of his apartment, he built small maquettes which were no more than 30 cm long. If he saw that the maquettes had potential to be translated on a monumental scale, he would have the works manufactured as large sculptures by a local fabrication plant. His powerful but

spare works were often fabricated at Lippincott, Inc., in Connecticut, a plant that was specially developed to strictly produce works of art.

Meadmore explored variations of elongated, squared metal tubes in a majority of his works. In the mid-1970s, his sculptures became more complex; the single bar divided, moving into multiple directions while the surfaces remained understated, painted a matte black or left to rust. "Offshoot" is an example of that development, as a single, squared tube twists upward to join a massive horizontal section which then divides and turns once more. An illusion of lightness is created as the dark horizontal piece balances effortlessly in spite of its weight and length of twenty-four feet.

Meadmore is represented in collections at major museums in Australia, as well as at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum, the Butler Institute of American Art and others in the United States and Japan. Large-scale sculptures have been installed on college campuses throughout the country, including Princeton University, Columbia University, and the University of Michigan. One-person exhibitions have been held at the Contemporary Sculpture Center, Tokyo; Amarillo Art Center, Texas; Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan; Albuquerque Museum, New Mexico; Jacksonville Art Museum, Florida; and Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio.

In his spare time, Meadmore liked to play the drums and to host jam sessions.

Clement Meadmore died in New York City on April 19, 2005.